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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: PROGRESS IN TURKEY'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

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B) ANKARA 3436

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Sensitive But Unclassified. Please handle accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: A visiting U.S. team was impressed by the level of commitment and sophistication in emergency planning evidenced in a range of meetings with national-level disaster assistance players in the Turkish capital. FEMA and OFDA committed to follow up with the Turkish Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) on a tailored training on emergency coordination for 4-6 young professionals. USG provided training would help empower TEMA in the Turkish disaster response structure where it has been slow to gain experience and authority. End Summary.

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FEMA-OFDA Training Targeted at TEMA  
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¶12. (SBU) Bonnie Butler from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Robert Andrew from OFDA, and Dewey Perks from Fairfax Search and Rescue met Turkish counterpart agencies March 1-2 in Ankara. Turkish Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) DG Hasan Ipek emphasized that his organization was modeled after the U.S. FEMA and sought training of 4-6 young professionals in emergency management and coordination. The FEMA and OFDA reps agreed to follow up with TEMA and the Embassy to arrange a set of training and site-visits to fill out a tailored 1-2 month program. Although FEMA had implemented "trainer of trainer" programs at Istanbul Technical University after the 1999 earthquakes, all agreed that FEMA should target direct training at TEMA to renew contacts and empower their relatively new status in the Turkish structure.

¶13. (SBU) Ipek noted that TEMA was relatively young, having been established as a condition of World Bank credit to Turkey in the aftermath of the earthquakes. It was still having difficulty asserting its authority over the many entrenched bureaucracies that play a role in disaster response. The TEMA DG explained that disaster response lay first with the Provincial Governors. Upon a request for outside help from the central government, TEMA would step into the coordinating role with establishment of an ad hoc crisis coordination center at the Prime Ministry with TEMA serving as the operational secretariat. FEMA Training Officer Bonnie Butler noted that FEMA replaced twenty stove-piped agencies, all with different cultures, and it had taken a long time for FEMA to come into its own. She highlighted the importance of planning,

exercising, and socializing among disaster assistance peers.

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Turkish Red Crescent - Kizilay  
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14. (SBU) The Director General of the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS), Omer Tasli, emphasized Turkey's dual bottom-up and center-driven approach. He noted that TRCS was prominent at all levels. Because of its reputation, expertise, and popularity with the Turkish public, it enjoys ample funding. TRCS was active in international relief (Pakistan, Indonesia, Lebanon, etc.) and would be a key player in a domestic event. It would be the lead for blood supply service and has special strengths in mobile medical clinics.

15. (SBU) Tasli emphasized the importance of TEMA in the national coordinating structure, noting that it was set up at World Bank insistence and modeled after U.S. FEMA. Tasli said that TRSC believed in the post-1999 system and saw TEMA as the critical umbrella disaster manager in the Turkish structure. Still, parts of the government and public continued to look to the TRCS for the initial response to a disaster. Tasli cited the recent floods in Batman in the Southeast; when the Governor immediately called Kizilay, he encouraged him to talk first to TEMA.

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A Competing Stove-Pipe: Housing Disaster Affairs  
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16. (SBU) Ministry of Housing and Resettlement Disaster Affairs Director General Mustafa Taymaz emphasized that his Directorate had two key roles: 1) minimizing risk and disaster prevention in Turkey's building stock and 2) minimizing the impact of a disaster, including provision of temporary shelter. Noting that TEMA sat at the top of the coordinating structure, he said that his office gave technical assistance. He admitted that Turkey's disaster structure

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was in flux. Taymaz said his office had responsibility for creating and enforcing building earthquake standards and improving construction quality. He noted that his Directorate had a strong regional and local presence that could be drawn on for prevention, mitigation, and response. Taymaz described the seismic sensing network that had been significantly boosted after 1999. He said that his office was busy on a new program for city risk maps. With research from more recent earthquakes in Erzincan and Bingol, Taymaz said that his agency was working on public awareness and auditing/enforcement, clearly challenges in Turkey. Taymaz said that a new pending regulation, which would embody World Bank support, would create greater requirements for retrofit of existing building stock, an expensive, but important challenge.

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Civil Defense  
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17. (SBU) Yet another experienced and historic structure with a strong local-level presence is the Ministry of Interior's Civil Defense Directorate. International Relations Department Head Ahmet Hamdi Usta cited extensive changes post-1999, mainly entailing increasing regional capacity for search and rescue. He said that Civil Defense had a presence in all 850 Districts and 81 Provinces, as well as 11 SAR units (each with 120 personnel with various functions) positioned in different regions. Usta noted that in an emergency, the Ministry of Interior could draw on uniformed Jandarma, Border Security, and National Security Units, which maintained special ties to the TGS. Usta said that Ankara had a 30-meter square "shaking table", used for research and training. The Civil Defense officer described the importance of the Provincial Governor (a representative of Interior) in the disaster response and mitigation, noting that he could call on all local assets to assist.

As almost an afterthought he mentioned the role of TEMA, but in a telling comment characterized it as focused more on international coordination (a facet which TEMA downplays). Usta said there had been a proliferation of civil and volunteer SAR organizations which

would be coordinated by Civil Defense in a disaster.

¶18. (SBU) MFA International Organizations Department Head Ali Riza Ozcoskun said MFA strongly supported TEMA in its coordinating role. He noted that TEMA performing its coordinating function in inter-agency exercises, including with TGS, would help reinforce their role. Ozcoskun said that starting this year TEMA would take over the role from the NSC for organizing national exercises. Ozcoskun said that MFA would be the primary interlocutor for international partners in a disaster relief effort. He emphasized that the MFA would immediately waive visa requirements for international relief workers. Ozcoskun expressed strong support for FEMA-OFDA providing training to TEMA to build its expertise and empowerment.

¶19. (SBU) COMMENT: The visiting FEMA-OFDA team was impressed by the level of commitment, capacity, planning, and sophistication among Turkish agencies. Continued exercises and training will help clarify and project TEMA's disaster management and coordination role. FEMA and OFDA are very interested in providing training to contribute to TEMA's expertise and to deepen the relationship between the two institutions, also contributing to our bilateral strategic relationship. TEMA, Civil Defense, and TGS intend to participate in the U.S. Military Flexible Leader simulation of a disaster befalling Izmir, Turkey, which will augment our contacts and understanding of Turkey's disaster response.

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